

Soviet Medical Door Opens to Dr. Hosler

By NORMAN MELNICK

Publication of a technical manual and a bibliographical note on the last page were forged into a trip last month to Red Square for a Bratenahl surgeon and his wife.

Awed, vodka-tized and highly flattered, Dr. Robert M. Hosler and Mrs. Hosler yesterday recounted the genesis and the high-water marks of their nine-day trip to the Soviet Union.

It actually began four years ago with the publication of Dr. Hosler's "A Manual on Cardiac Resuscitation," an area of medicine which has absorbed him for a quarter of a century.

The work, regarded as a source book in the field, was published in many languages. It is in its second printing.

Dr. V. A. Negovsky, a prominent Russian physician, obtained a copy and was surprised and pleased to find himself mentioned as a reference.

The director of the Soviet Union's Institute of Resuscitation, probably the only one in the world, lifted his high brow and took pen and paper.

On a July day in 1957, Dr. Hosler opened a curious letter, red-stamped and addressed to him at his home, 13421 Lake Shore Boulevard. A neighbor translated the Russian.

"When I discovered who had written to me," Dr. Hosler remarked, "I was frankly flattered. I realized I had gotten behind the Iron Curtain . . .

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Why, I wasn't even sure Negovsky was alive."

The Russian physician, himself an authority on heart res-

toration, told how much he enjoyed Dr. Hosler's book and requested an exchange of ideas and information. The manual, Prof. Negovsky reported, had been circulated in every Russian hospital.

In the next 14 months, four letters followed, the last of which extended an invitation to the Hoslers to visit Moscow.

They arrived there on a red carpet on Sept. 12. Protocol, a condition of life to the Soviets, was refreshingly abandoned.

Dr. Serge Kurashov, minister of public health of the Russian federated states, threw up his hands, smiled broadly, and asked, "What would you like to see?"

"For a doctor," the Brate-

nahl surgeon and councilman observed, "it was like receiving the key to the city from the mayor."

Tour Institute

The Hoslers were permitted to tour Negovsky's institute, visit several blood banks and observe first-hand abdominal and thoracic surgery and an organ transplantation.

These were the places and things, Dr. Hosler explained, few if any other American men of medicine had ever seen. The key in his case, the surgeon said, was Negovsky's invitation, obviously stamped with the Kremlin's approval.

Dr. and Mrs. Hosler watched, astonished, as a stoical Russian, in hospital gown, walked unassisted into an operating room, climbed on the operating table and awaited abdominal surgery.

He had had no pre-anesthetic drugs. He wore his own brown socks.

Dr. Hosler was impressed by the advanced Russian instruments, the marvelous operating room teamwork and the abundance of medical research and medical personnel.

Academic Freedom

"In their institutes," he observed, "they have as complete academic freedom as I've ever witnessed."

He alluded to the Russian physicians he met—all upper echelon—as "dedicated, nice people." They discouraged any political debate by announcing: "In medicine, there are no international boundaries."

They are well paid and well housed (an apartment in the city and a vacation home in the Baltic).

The severity of their expression yielded only under the heavy onslaught of vodka. They like their Scotch and brandy, too.

Hopes for Conference

Dr. Hosler said he had high hopes an international conference on resuscitation, to be held here or in Moscow, would be a reality within a year. Prof. Negovsky expressed keen interest in the proposition.

The Russians also tentatively agreed to submit the specifications for some of their time-saving surgical instruments, the physician said.

Mrs. Hosler summed up: "All our impressions were better than we had expected."



Dr. Robert M. Hosler scans a picture book of Moscow